



Callaloo

Volume 21, Number 3, Summer 1998

E-ISSN: 1080-6512 Print ISSN: 0161-2492

DOI: 10.1353/cal.1998.0174

Putte-de Windt, Igma van.

Pool, Monique S.

Caribbean Poetry in Papiamentu

Callaloo - Volume 21, Number 3, Summer 1998, pp. 654-659

The Johns Hopkins University Press

Igma van Putte-de Windt - Caribbean Poetry in Papiamentu - Callaloo 21:3 Callaloo 21.3 (1998) 654-659 Caribbean Poetry in Papiamentu Igma van Putte-de Windt Literature, especially poetry, in the Creole language Papiamentu is important to the inhabitants of the three Caribbean islands, Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, which are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and populated by diverse peoples and cultures. Papiamentu in these Leeward Islands was not imposed by any external source but rather evolved as the indigenous language. Yet, although Papiamentu has been spoken in the Antilles from the very beginning of the slave trade, poetry was written in the languages of the European oppressors until the 20th century: most writing was done in Spanish, to a lesser degree in French and even more sparingly in Dutch, languages considered "civilized." Papiamentu was relegated to the status of "a very poor language" and "damaging to the intellect of children," words taken from a Dutch document from the last century. The First Milestone: J.S. Corsen (Curaçao 1853-1911) At a very young age, our forefathers learned that Papiamentu was not a language but a dialect or a primitive language without any grammar. Indoctrinated as they were, those who knew how to write did so in "civilized" languages. The first to recognize Papiamentu as a literary language was J.S. Corsen, who has been called the father of Papiamentu literature, having published the first poem in Papiamentu,...

© 2008 Project MUSE®. Produced by The Johns Hopkins University Press in collaboration with The Milton S. Eisenhower Library.